

Remarks

In view of the following remarks and amendments, favorable reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested. Claims 1 – 46 remain in this application. Claims 20 – 22, 24 – 26, 32, 33, 38, 40, 42, and 44 - 46 have been amended. Claims 19, 30, 31, 39, and 41 have been canceled without prejudice.

1. Allowed Claims/Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's allowance of claims 1 – 18, 28, and 29. Applicant also notes with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that the subject matter of claims 26, 27, 34 – 38, 42, 43 and 46 is patentable, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

2. § 102 Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 31, 32, 39, and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,625,550 to Scott et al. [hereinafter Scott].

The Applicant has rewritten claim 38 in independent form to include all of the subject matter of claim 31 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Claim 32 and claim 33 have been amended to depend from claim 38. Claims 34 – 37 depend from claim 33. Claim 31 is hereby canceled without prejudice to applicant's pursuit of these and other claims of varying scope in one or more continuing applications.

The Applicant has rewritten claim 42 in independent form to include all of the subject matter of independent claim 39 and intervening claim 41 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Claims 40, 44 - 46 have been amended to depend from claim 42. Claim 43 currently depends from claim 42. Claim 39 and claim 41 are hereby canceled without prejudice to applicant's pursuit of these and other claims of varying scope in one or more continuing applications.

Accordingly, claims 32 – 38, 40, and 42 - 46 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

3. § 103 Rejections

A. The Examiner has rejected claims 33, 41, 44, and 45 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable for obviousness over Scott. Claims 33, 41, 44, and 45 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103 by virtue of the amendments discussed above in Section 2.

B. The Examiner has rejected claims 19 – 25 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable for obviousness over U.S. Patent No. 6,414,829 to Haun et al. [hereinafter Haun].

The Applicant has rewritten claim 26 in allowable form to include all of the subject matter of claim 19 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Claims 20 – 22 and 24 and 25 have been amended to depend from claim 26. Claim 23 depends from claim 22. Claim 19 and claim 30 are hereby canceled without prejudice to applicant's pursuit of these and other claims of varying scope in one or more continuing applications.

Accordingly, claims 20 – 27, 33, 41, 44, and 45 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

4. Conclusion

Based upon remarks, amendments, and papers of record, Applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims 1 – 18, 20 – 29, 32 – 38, 40, and 42 - 46 and a prompt Notice of Allowance thereon.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Response timely. Should Applicant be in error, Applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Response timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 50-0289.

Please direct any questions or comments to Daniel P. Malley at (607) 256-7307.

Respectfully submitted,

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